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NSC BRIEFING

13 May 1954

THE STRIKE SITUATION IN HONDURAS

- I. Strong circumstantial evidence links  
Guatemalan Communists to strike:
- A. Guatemalan Communist agitators  
long reported in area.
  - B. Effectiveness of strike shows long  
efficient planning.
  - C. Striker ultimatum suggests other  
than bona fide labor objectives.
  - D. Strike leaders have adequate  
funds.
  - E. Unauthorized Guatemalan plane  
landed in area on 1 May.
  - F. Honduras closed two Guatemalan  
consulates in area on 5 May.
  - G. Guatemalan ambassador recalled  
for consultation.
  - H. Communist literature found in  
area.

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I. ~~Guatemalans reportedly preparing to cross border.~~

J. Guatemalan labor confederation offered "moral and economic support."

II. Strike well timed. *STARTED 14,000 IN UNITED FRUIT - NOW TOTALS 26,000.*

A. Three-way political split re

Honduran October presidential elections.

1. Nationalist Party - Candidate: 80-year old unpopular ex-dictator Carias.

a. Carias reported prepared for coup if defeat appears probable, but army opposition likely.

2. Reformist Party - Candidate: General Williams, pro-US, backed by President Galvez'

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3. Liberal Party - Candidate:

Dr. VILLEDA; traditional  
opposition party, now be-  
lieved Communist-infiltrated.

B. Carias could use lack of de-  
cisive government action as pre-  
text for coup.

III. Government can probably maintain order.

A. Strikers are still orderly.  
B. Government promptly reinforced  
troops in strike area.

IV. Since workers have some real grievances,  
strike susceptible to Communist ex-  
ploitation.

A. Communists might gain entering  
wedge in politics in return for  
strike settlement.  
B. Non-Communist leftists sym-  
pathetic to strikers' cause.

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C. United Fruit Company is strong  
emotional issue throughout  
Central America.